(c) whether it is also a fact that roads would be constructed by the public sector also as an exception to this decision;

(d) if so, the circumstances under which roads would be constructed by the public sector; and

(e) the decisions taken by Government regarding utilization of money being recovered by Government as taxes in the name of development or roads?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIYAPPA): (a) No, Sir. However, to augment the resources required for development and maintenance of National Highways, the participation of private sector under Build, Operate and Transfer (BOT) mechanism with viability gap funding is being encouraged.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

(e) Substantial amount of resources is required for development and maintenance of all cagegories of roads in the country. The cess on petrol and diesel charged for development of roads are for development of all categories of roads i.e. National Highways, State Roads, Rural Roads and safety works at unmainned railway level crossings. The amount allocated from this cess for the National Highways is also used for raising the resources required for their development and maintenance.

Ferry service in Mumbai

†3209. DR. PRABHA THAKUR: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to introduce a ferry service through sea for the residents of Mumbai to get rid of the day to day difficulties due to more population and limited roads system in Mumbai;

(b) whether the Government of Maharashtra have given any proposal to the Central Government regarding introduction of ferry service through sea; and

(c) the date on which the said proposal was forwarded and the decision Government have taken or propose to take in this regard along with the details thereof?

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

Funding for National Highways Project

3210. SHRIMATI BIMBA RAIKAR: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether funding for National Highways Projects through NHAI is keeping pace with the projected requirements;

(b) whether the Capital Expenditure through NHAI for the year 2004-05 projected at Rs. 9000/- crores is less than the previous years' allocations;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether the foreign direct investment in road transport and highway sector during the past year has not been substantial; and

(e) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIYAPPA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) the expenditure is projected based on requirement of the projects as per project cycle. However, there is no short fall in progress of the projects.

(d) and (e) The foreign direct investment is made in the from of equity/ debt by the concessionaire of BOT/Annuity projects. It is not received by the Authority.

Smart Licence Plates

3211. SHRI S. K. KHABIR UDDIN AHMED: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Supreme Court has recently gave a verdict on use of 'Smart license plates' in every vehicle;

(b) if so, how many millions of persons, who are painting and/or engraving license plates at present would become redundant; and